



# News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Comment period extended on proposed changes to oil and gas regulation**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (FS) are extending by 60 days the public comment period for proposed changes in regulations that set forth the requirements necessary to obtain approval for proposed oil and gas activity on all Federal and Indian lands (except those of the Osage Tribe).

The set of regulations, or “rule,” being amended is commonly known as Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 1.

In response to public requests for additional time and because of impacts from the recently enacted Energy Policy Act of 2005, the BLM and the FS will extend the comment period to October 25, 2005, an additional 60 days beyond the original comment period closing date of August 26, 2005.

Onshore Order Number 1 was not been updated since November 1983. Numerous legal and policy developments have occurred since that time, including congressional passage of the 1987 Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act. The proposed changes are designed to improve the processing of oil and gas drilling applications while protecting surface owners and public land resources.

In order to make the broader proposed rule consistent with the recently enacted Energy Policy Act of 2005, the BLM intends to publish in the *Federal Register* in the near future an additional proposed rule on the timing of approvals for applications for permits to drill (APDs). Comments on the additional proposed rule will also then be accepted until October 25, 2005.

Proposed changes to Onshore Order Number 1 include provisions to:

- help protect the rights of private surface owners on split-estate lands;
- establish a new approval process for multiple oil and gas wells;
- encourage oil and gas operators to use Best Management Practices (BMPs) in developing their drilling permit applications; and
- clarify that the BLM has existing legal authority to require bonding for off-lease facilities that are needed for further development of a lease.

Comments on the proposed rule change can be sent to: Director (630), Bureau of Land Management, Eastern States Office, 7450 Boston Boulevard, Springfield, Virginia, 22153, Attention: RIN 1004-AD59. Comments may also be hand-delivered to 1620 L Street N.W., Suite 401, Washington, D.C. 20036. Comments may be e-mailed to: [Comments\\_washington@blm.gov](mailto:Comments_washington@blm.gov) (include “Attn: AD59” in the subject line).

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